

EP 30 179 (P)

(12) **UK Patent Application** (19) **GB** (11) **2 336 233** (13) **A**

(43) Date of A Publication 13.10.1999

(21) Application No 9807304.2

(22) Date of Filing 07.04.1998

(71) Applicant(s)

Astra Games Limited
(Incorporated in the United Kingdom)
North Court, David Street, Bridgend Industrial Estate,
BRIDGEND, Mid Glam, CF31 3SA, United Kingdom

(72) Inventor(s)

Anthony B Mathias

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

Wynne-Jones, Laine & James
Morgan Arcade Chambers, 33 St Mary Street,
CARDIFF, CF1 2AB, United Kingdom

(51) INT CL⁶

G07F 17/32

(52) UK CL (Edition Q)

G4V VAA V118

(56) Documents Cited

WO 96/23287 A1 JP 010080519 A US 5580055 A

(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition Q) G4V VAA

INT CL⁶ G07F 17/32

ONLINE:WPI

(54) Abstract Title

An amusement or gaming machine with colour variable backlighting

(57) A gaming or amusement-with-prizes machine having a plurality of reels wherein the backlighting of the symbols on the reels in the screen windows is colour variable, at least one symbol combination on a win line generating different prizes according to which backlighting colour is randomly or apparently randomly selected and energised. The reels are spun and then stopped in a random or apparently random manner. Preferably the backlighting is selected from white and one other colour, the colour other than white generating a greater prize. There may be at least two other colours which can be selected simultaneously and used to generate a mixed colour, generating a different prize from those generated by the other colours. The backlighting may vary from reel to reel.

GB 2 336 233 A

The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1995

IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO GAMING OR AMUSEMENT
WITH PRIZES MACHINES

This invention relates to gaming or amusement-with-prizes machines. It is concerned with those which have
5 several side-by-side reels, usually three or four, with arrays of different symbols around each reel. In play, after insertion of a coin or token, or once the player is in credit, the reels spin and stop in a random (or at least in an apparently random) manner to show a row of symbols on a
10 line. Certain combinations of symbols on this line generate prizes, which are usually paid out automatically.

The player only sees a short segment of each reel periphery in a window of a screen. Within each reel, and registering with the associated window, there is generally
15 a backlighting unit. This, when energised, shows up the symbol on the win line more brightly, and it may also illuminate symbols immediately above and below the win line, which are also visible through the window. In some machines win lines are not confined to the straight, central row of
20 symbols but may be provided by diagonals or rows above and below the normal win line.

Only a limited number of symbols can be accommodated on each reel, and this restricts the odds on winning prizes. Machine manufacturers are always looking for ways of
25 increasing the odds, to make available the very occasional extra large prize, and it is the aim of this invention to provide one solution to this problem.

According to the present invention there is provided a gaming or amusement-with-prizes machine of the kind described in which the backlighting of the symbols in the screen windows is colour variable, at least one symbol combination on a win line generating different prizes according to which backlighting colour is energised.

In this Specification, colour includes white and the normal backlighting will be white. Fruit symbols are multi-coloured, and to illuminate them in anything other than white would look very odd. However, for the top prize symbols other than fruit are used, and the number seven is popular. Often three sevens in a row is the maximum prize. Such symbols can be presented in opalescent white paint, and with white backlighting they will of course appear white. But with red backlighting they will appear red and so on. It is envisaged that a "normal" prize will be available when there is white backlighting of at least one winning symbol combination, but if it turns into another colour, a super prize will be awarded. That can be arranged to happen very rarely.

Generally, just one extra colour will be sufficient, but there could be more with graded super prizes. If there are two sets of non-white colour bulbs (or LEDs or optic fibres) in the backlighting unit, one could use each set independently or both together to mix the colours and obtain a third one, in addition to the basic white.

It would also be possible to backlight one reel with one colour, another reel with another colour and so on,

enabling further grading of the super prizes, but generally the win line will be illuminated with a uniform colour.



Application No: GB 9807304.2
Claims searched: all

Examiner: Claire L Williams
Date of search: 27 January 1999

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:
UK Cl (Ed.Q): G4V VAA
Int Cl (Ed.6): G07F 17/32
Other: ONLINE:WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
A	WO 96/23287 A1 (NSM) Abstract and Figure 1	
A	JP 10080519 A (OLYMPIA KK) Abstract	
A	US 5580055 (HAGIWARA) column 9 line 38 - column 10 line 6	

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.
& Member of the same patent family

A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

CLAIMS

1. A gaming or amusement-with-prizes machine having a plurality of reels with symbols around their peripheries which, in use, are spun and then stop in a random or
5 apparently random manner to show in windows of a screen a row of back-lit symbols in a line, certain combinations of such symbols generating prizes, wherein the backlighting of the symbols in the screen windows is colour variable, at least one symbol combination on a win line generating
10 different prizes according to which backlighting colour is randomly or apparently randomly selected and energised.
2. A gaming or amusement-with-prizes machine according to Claim 1, wherein the backlighting is selected from white and at least one other colour, backlighting of another colour
15 generating a prize greater than that generated by white backlighting.
3. A gaming or amusement-with-prizes machine according to Claim 1, wherein there are at least two other colours and these can be selected and energised simultaneously to
20 produce a mixed colour, this generating a different prize from those generated by those colours used singly.
4. A gaming or amusement-with-prizes machine according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the colour backlight is the same for all the reels.
- 25 5. A gaming or amusement-with-prizes machine according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the colour backlight can vary from reel to reel, different colour combinations generating different prizes.